

Message Text

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63

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EA-06 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-01 RSC-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 AID-05 FBIE-00 /042 W

----- 026079

R 141857Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7250

INFO AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UK

SUBJECT: FUGITIVE MP RESIGNS, BY-ELECTION ON HORIZON

REF: LONDON 16775

1. JOHN STONEHOUSE, LABOR MP WHO DISAPPEARED IN MIAMI (REFTEL) AND LATER SURFACED IN AUSTRALIA UNDER ASSUMED NAME AND USING FALSE PASSPORT, JANUARY 13 CABLED RESIGNATION TO EDWARD SHORT, LEADER OF COMMONS. WE ANTICIPATE RESIGNATION WILL BE ACCEPTED EXPEDITIOUSLY, OPENING WAY FOR FIRST BY-ELECTION IN CURRENT PARLIAMENT. PRESS HAS RECENTLY POINTED OUT FACT THAT ABSENCE OF STONEHOUSE AND HOSPITALIZATION OF TWO OTHER LABOR MPS THEORETICALLY ERASED LABOR MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENTARY SESSION WHICH OPENED JANUARY 13. PRACTICAL EFFECT OF THESE ABSENCES, HOWEVER, IS MINIMAL, AS LABOR CAN COUNT ON SUPPORT OF SINGLE SDLP MEMBER AND OPPOSITION IS NEITHER COHESIVE NOR WITHOUT ITS OWN ABSENT MPS.

2. AS STONEHOUSE WAS RE-ELECTED BY VERY SAFE MARGIN (NEARLY 16,000 VOTES) IN OCTOBER 1974, THERE APPEARS TO BE LITTLE CHANCE THAT LABOR WILL LOSE HIS WALSALL NORTH SEAT IN BY-ELECTION, EVEN IF MANY LABOR VOTERS FAIL TO

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GO TO POLLS, AS IS OFTEN THE CASE IN BY-ELECTIONS. (IN

PERCENTAGE TERMS A CONSERVATIVE WIN WOULD REQUIRE A 16.7
PERCENT SHIFT IN VOTER PREFERENCE.) LABOR PARTY SOURCES
REPORT THAT TERRY PITT, FORMER DIRECTOR OF LABOR PARTY
RESEARCH DEPARTMENT AND ADVISOR TO EDWARD SHORT, IS LEAD-
ING CONTENDER FOR CONSTITUENCY PARTY NOMINATION.

SPIERS

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Message Attributes

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